

**James Madison to James Monroe, October 30, 1823.
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TO JAMES MONROE. MAD. MSS.

Oct. 30, 1823.

Dr. Sir, —I have just received from Mr. Jefferson your letter to him, with the correspondence between Mr. Canning & Mr. Rush, sent for his & my perusal and our opinions on the subject of it.¹

¹ See Monroe's *Writings* (Hamilton), VI., 323, *et seq.* On Nov. 1, Madison wrote to Jefferson:

“With the British power & navy combined with our own we have nothing to fear from the rest of the World; and in the great struggle of the Epoch between liberty and despotism, we owe it to ourselves to sustain the former in this hemisphere at least. I have even suggested an invitation to the B. Govt. to join in applying the ‘small effort for so much good’ to the French invasion of Spain, & to make Greece an object of some such favorable attention. Why Mr. Canning & his colleagues did not sooner interpose against the calamity wch. could not have escaped foresight cannot be otherwise explained but by the different aspect of the question when it related to liberty in Spain, and to the extension of British Commerce to her former Colonies.’— *Mad. MSS.*

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From the disclosures of Mr. Canning it appears, as was otherwise to be inferred, that the success of France agst. Spain would be followed by an attempt of the Holy Allies to reduce the Revolutionized Colonies of the latter to their former dependence.

The professions we have made to these neighbours, our sympathies with their liberties & independence, the deep interest we have in the most friendly relations with them, and the consequences threatened by a command of their resources by the Great Powers confederated agst. the rights & reforms, of which we have given so conspicuous & persuasive an example, all unite in calling for our efforts to defeat the meditated crusade. It is particularly fortunate that the policy of G. Britain, tho' guided by calculations different from ours, has presented a co-operation for an object the same with ours. With that co-operation we have nothing to fear from the rest of Europe, and with it the best assurance of success to our laudable views. There ought not, therefore, to be any backwardness, I think, in meeting her in the way she

has proposed; keeping in view of course, the spirit & forms of the Constitution in every step taken in the road to war, which must be the last step if those short of war should be without avail.

It cannot be doubted that Mr. Canning's proposal tho made with the air of *consultation*, as well as concert, was founded on a predetermination to take the course marked out, whatever might be the reception given here to his invitation. But this consideration ought not to divert us from what is just & proper in itself. Our co-operation is due to ourselves & to the world; and whilst it must ensure success, in the event of an appeal to force, it doubles the chance of success without that appeal. It is not improbable that G. Britain would like best to have the merit of being the sole Champion of her new friends, notwithstanding the greater difficulty to be encountered, but for the dilemma in which she would be placed. She must in that case, either leave us as neutrals to extend our commerce & navigation at the expence of hers, or make us enemies, by renewing her paper blockades & other arbitrary proceedings on the Ocean. It may be hoped that such a

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dilemma will not be without a permanent tendency to check her proneness to unnecessary wars.

Why the B. Cabinet should have scrupled to arrest the calamity it now apprehends, by applying to the threats of France agst. Spain, “the small effort” which it scruples not to employ in behalf of Spanish America, is best known to itself. It is difficult to find any other explanation than that interest in the one case has more weight in its casuistry, than principle had in the other.

Will it not be honorable to our Country, & possibly not altogether in vain to invite the British Govt. to extend the “avowed disapprobation” of the project agst. the Spanish Colonies, to the enterprise of France agst. Spain herself, and even to join in some declaratory Act in behalf of the Greeks. On the supposition that no form could be given to the Act clearing it of a pledge to follow it up by war, we ought to compare the good to be done with the little injury to be apprehended to the U. S., shielded as their interests would be by the power and the fleets of G. Britain united with their own. These are questions however which may require more information than I possess, and more reflection than I can now give them.

What is the extent of Mr. Canning's disclaimer as to “the remaining possessions of Spain in America?” Does it exclude future views of acquiring Porto Rico &c, as well as Cuba? It leaves G. Britain free as I understand it in relation to other Quarters of the Globe.

I return the correspondence of Mr. Rush & Mr. Canning, with assurances, &c.